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DISSOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT.

That famous, that prime thing, called a *general election*, is at hand. Now, then, what talk we shall hear about the *glorious Constitution*! Now the glorious privilege of Englishmen is about to be exercised! A friend advises me to make an appeal to the virtue, to the public spirit of *the people* upon this occasion. I will do no such thing. I will practise no such delusion. I will do nothing that shall tend to make any human being believe, ~~that the people's~~ voice is expressed by the tools of the Borough-mongers. But I will do that which will be much more suitable to the occasion, as well as more consistent with truth and sincerity, and more likely to produce good to the country: I will here call to the recollection of the public, and will place before them, not my own opinions upon the state of the representation as it now is; but the opinions of others, together with some facts, which, though already pretty generally known, can never be too often repeated; facts, which ought always to be kept alive in the mind of every man in every country, where there is one spark of the love of real liberty existing. I shall begin with giving, in their own words, the opinions of men, for some one or other of whom almost every reader will be found to entertain respect.

BLACKSTONE and LOCKE.

As it is essential to the very being of Parliament that Elections should be free, therefore, all undue influences upon the electors are illegal, and strongly prohibited; for Mr. Locke ranks it amongst those breaches of trust in the executive magistrate, which, according to his notions, amounts to a dissolution of government, if he employ the force, treasure, and offices of the society to corrupt the representatives, or openly to pre-engage the electors, and prescribe what manner of persons shall be chosen; for, thus to regulate candidates and electors, and new-model the ways of election, what is it but to cut up the government by the roots, and poison the very fountain of pub-

lic security.—*Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, Book I. Chap. 2.*

EARL MULGRAVE.

But, my lords, there is another kind of incapacity worse than this; I mean that of parliament-men's having such places in the exchequer, as the very profit of them depends on the money given to the King in parliament. Would any of your lordships intrust a man to make a bargain for you, whose very interest is to make you give as much as he possibly can? It puts me in mind of a farce where an actor holds a dialogue with himself, first speaking in one tone, and then answering himself in another.—*Earl Mulgrave's Speech, in the House of Lords, Dec. 22, 1692.*

THE GREAT LORD CHATHAM.

Mr. Pitt, when contending for a Reform in Parliament, in 1782, told the House, that he personally knew, that it was the opinion of his father, that, "without recurring to first principles in this respect, and establishing a more solid and equal representation of the people, by which the proper constitutional connexion should be revived, this nation, with the best capacities for grandeur and happiness of any on the face of the earth, must be confounded with the mass of those whose liberties were lost in the corruption of the people."

MR. PITT.

The defect of representation is the national disease; and unless you apply a remedy directly to that disease, you must inevitably take the consequences with which it is pregnant. Without a Parliamentary Reform the nation will be plunged into new wars; without a Parliamentary Reform you cannot be safe against bad ministers, nor can even good ministers be of use to you. No honest man can, according to the present system, continue minister.—*Mr. Pitt's Speech, 1782.*

MR. FOX.

The whole of this system, as it is now carried on, is as outrageous to morality as it

is pernicious to just government; it gives a scandal to our character, which not merely degrades the House of Commons in the eyes of the people, but it does more; it undermines the very principles of integrity in their hearts, and gives a fashion to dishonesty and imposture. They hear of a person giving or receiving four or five thousand pounds as the purchase-money of a seat for a close borough; and they hear the very man who received and put into his pocket the money, make a loud and vehement speech in this House against Bribery; and they see him, perhaps, move for the commitment to prison of a poor unfortunate wretch at your bar, who has been convicted of taking a single guinea for his vote in the very borough, perhaps, where he had publicly and unblushingly sold his influence, though that miserable guinea was necessary to save a family from starving under the horrors of a war which he had contributed to bring upon the country. These are the things that paralyze you to the heart: these are the things that vitiate the whole system, that spread degeneracy, hypocrisy, and sordid fraud over the country, and take from us the energies of virtue, and sap the foundations of patriotism and spirit.

—*Mr. Fox's Speech, 1797.*

MR. GREY (NOW EARL GREY).

Has the House of Commons shown either vigilance of inquiry, or independence of spirit? Have they investigated the origin of their misfortunes, or checked ministers in their ruinous career? Nay, the very reverse. In a war remarkable only for misfortune, and distinguished on our part solely by disgrace, they have suffered ministers to go on from failure to failure, adding misfortune to misfortune, and madness to folly, without either investigation or inquiry.—As a remedy for these evils, Mr. Grey recommended ‘a Reform of Parliament; and to obviate the charge of making complaints without prescribing some specific mode of relief, he proposed, that instead of 92 county members there should be 113, and that the right of voting should be extended to copyholders and leaseholders, who are bound to pay rent for a certain number of years. To prevent compromises, he proposed that every county should be divided into grand divisions, each of which should return a representative. He also proposed, that the remaining 400 members should be returned by householders.’—*Mr. Grey's Speech in 1797.*



MR. BURKE.

In a speech upon that infamous job, the *Nabob of Arcot's debts*, on the 28th of Feb. 1785, after having described PAUL BENFIELD as “a criminal, who ought long since to have fattened the region kites with his offal,” says, that his agent, RICHARD ATKINSON, had kept “a sort of public office, or counting-house, where the whole business of the last general election was managed. It was,” said he, “openly managed by the direct agent and attorney of Benfield.” And then he says, that, as an indemnification for this, “the claims of Benfield and his crew were put above all inquiry.”

These facts were very notorious at the time; but, when Mr. Burke afterwards obtained from the same minister (Pitt) a pension of three thousand pounds a year for life, with remainder of one half to his wife; then he treated the reformers with more severity than he had treated Paul Benfield.

These opinions, and these assertions of Burke, are, however, of less weight than the statement made by the “*Friends of the People*,” in 1793, in the form of a Petition to the House of Commons itself. Amongst those Gentlemen, who called their Society “the Friends of the People,” were the present Duke of Bedford, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Whitbread, Mr. Grey (now Earl Grey), Mr. Tierney, Lord Lauderdale, Sir Arthur Pigot, Mr. Dudley North, General Tarleton, Sir Ralph Milbank, and many others, amongst whom were 27 members of parliament. The Petition was presented by Mr. Grey (now Earl Grey) who pledged himself to prove the truth of the facts alleged in it. It was received by the House; no man attempted to deny the truth of its contents; but, it was never taken into consideration; and there it lies, unacted upon and unanswered, to this day. This is the document, which I am now about to insert, and to every part of which I beg leave to solicit the reader's attention.

“*Authentic Copy of a Petition praying for a Reform in Parliament, presented to the House of Commons by Charles Grey, Esq. on Monday, 6th May, 1793.*

“To the Honourable the Commons of Great Britain in Parliament assembled.

Sheweth,

“That by the form and spirit of the British constitution, the King is vested with the sole executive power.—That

the House of Lords consists of lords spiritual and temporal, deriving their titles and consequence either from the crown, or from hereditary privileges.—That these two powers, if they acted without control, would form either a despotic monarchy, or a dangerous oligarchy.—That the wisdom of our ancestors hath contrived, that these authorities may be rendered not only harmless, but beneficial, and be exercised for the security and happiness of the people.—That this security and happiness are to be looked for in the introduction of a third estate, distinct from, and a check upon the other two branches of the legislature; created by, representing, and responsible to, the people themselves.—That so much depending upon the preservation of this third estate, in such its constitutional purity and strength, your Petitioners are reasonably jealous of whatever may appear to vitiate the one, or to impair the other.—That at the present day the House of Commons does not fully and fairly represent the people of England, which, consistently with what your Petitioners conceive to be the principles of the constitution, they consider as a grievance, and therefore, with all becoming respect, lay their complaints before your honourable House.—That though the terms in which your petitioners state their grievance may be looked upon as strong, yet your honourable House is entreated to believe that no expression is made use of for the purpose of offence.—Your Petitioners in affirming that your honourable House is not an adequate representation of the people of England, do but state a fact, which, if the word "Representation" be accepted in its fair and obvious sense, they are ready to prove, and which they think detrimental to their interests, and contrary to the spirit of the constitution.—How far this inadequate representation is prejudicial to their interests, your Petitioners apprehend they may be allowed to decide for themselves; but how far it is contrary to the spirit of the constitution, they refer to the consideration of your honourable House.—If your honourable House shall be pleased to determine that the people of England ought not to be fully represented, your Petitioners pray that such your determination may be made known, to the end that the people may be apprized of their real situation; but if your honourable House shall conceive that the people are already fully represented, then your Petitioners beg leave

to call your attention to the following facts :

—Your Petitioners complain, that the number of representatives assigned to the different counties is grossly disproportioned to their comparative extent, population, and trade.—Your Petitioners complain, that the elective franchise is so partially and unequally distributed, and is in so many instances committed to bodies of men of such very limited numbers, that the majority of your honourable House is elected by less than fifteen thousand electors, which, even if the male adults in the kingdom be estimated at so low a number as three millions, is not more than the two hundredth part of the people to be represented.—Your Petitioners complain, that the right of voting is regulated by no uniform or rational principle.—Your Petitioners complain, that the exercise of the elective franchise is only renewed once in seven years.—Your Petitioners thus distinctly state the subject matter of their complaints, that your honourable House may be convinced that they are acting from no spirit of general discontent, and that you may with the more ease be enabled to inquire into the facts, and to apply the remedy.—For the evidence in support of the first complaint, your Petitioners refer to the return book of your honourable House.—Is it fitting, that Rutland and Yorkshire should bear an equal rank in the scale of county representation; or can it be right, that Cornwall alone should, by its extravagant proportion of borough members, outnumber not only the representatives of Yorkshire and Rutland together, but of Middlesex added to them? Or, if a distinction be taken between the landed and the trading interests, must it not appear monstrous that Cornwall and Wiltshire should send more borough members to parliament, than Yorkshire, Lancashire, Warwickshire, Middlesex, Worcestershire, and Somersetshire united? and that the total representation of all Scotland should but exceed by one member, the number returned for a single county in England?—The second complaint of your Petitioners is founded on the unequal proportions in which the elective franchise is distributed, and in support of it.—They affirm, that seventy of your honourable members are returned by thirty-five places, where the right of voting is vested in burgage and other tenures of a similar description, and in which it would be to trifle with the patience of your honourable House, to mention any number

of voters whatever, the elections at the places alluded to being notoriously a mere matter of form. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.—They affirm that in addition to the seventy honourable members so chosen, ninety more of your honourable members are elected by forty-six places, in none of which the number of voters exceeds fifty. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.—They affirm, that in addition to the hundred and sixty so elected, thirty-seven more of your honourable members are elected by nineteen places, in none of which the number of voters exceeds one hundred. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.—They affirm, that in addition to the hundred and ninety-seven honourable members so chosen, fifty-two more are returned to serve in parliament, by twenty-six places, in none of which the number of voters exceeds two hundred. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.—They affirm, that in addition to the two hundred and forty-nine so elected, twenty more are returned to serve in parliament for counties in Scotland by less than one hundred electors each, and ten for counties in Scotland by less than two hundred and fifty each. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove, even admitting the validity of fictitious votes.—They affirm, that in addition to the two hundred and seventy-nine so elected, thirteen districts of burghs in Scotland, not containing one hundred voters each, and two districts of burghs, not containing one hundred and twenty-five each, return fifteen more honourable members. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.—And in this manner, according to the present state of the representation, two hundred and ninety-four of your honourable members are chosen, and, being a majority of the entire House of Commons, are enabled to decide all questions in the name of the whole people of England and Scotland.—The third complaint of your Petitioners is founded on the present complicated rights of voting. From the caprice with which they have been varied, and the obscurity in which they have become involved by time and contradictory decisions, they are become a source of infinite confusion, litigation, and expense.—Your Petitioners need not tender any evidence of the inconveniences which arise from this defect in the representation, because the proof is to be found in your journals, and the minutes of the different committees who have been ap-

pointed under the 10th and 11th of the King. Your honourable House is but too well acquainted with the tedious, intricate, and expensive scenes of litigation which have been brought before you, in attempting to settle the legal import of those numerous distinctions which perplex and confound the present rights of voting. How many months of your valuable time have been wasted in listening to the wrangling of lawyers upon the various species of burgagehold, leasehold, and freehold! How many committees have been occupied in investigating the nature of scot and lot, pot wallers, commonalty, populacy, resiant inhabitants, and inhabitants at large! What labour and research have been employed in endeavouring to ascertain the legal claims of borough-men, aldermen, port men, select men, burgesses, and council-men! And what confusion has arisen from the complicated operation of clashing charters, from freemen resident and non-resident, and from the different modes of obtaining the freedom of corporations by birth, by servitude, by marriage, by redemption, by election, and by purchase! On all these points it is however needless for your Petitioners to enlarge, when your honourable House recollects the following facts; namely, that since the twenty-second of December 1790, no less than twenty-one committees have been employed in deciding upon litigated rights of voting. Of these, eight were occupied with the disputes of three boroughs, and there are petitions from four places yet remaining before your honourable House, waiting for a final decision to inform the electors what their rights really are.—But the complaint of your Petitioners on the subject of the want of an uniform and equitable principle in regulating the right of voting, extends as well to the arbitrary manner in which some are excluded, as to the intricate qualifications by which others are admitted to the exercise of that privilege.—Religious opinions create an incapacity to vote. All Papists are excluded generally, and, by the operation of the test laws, Protestant Dissenters are deprived of a voice in the election of representatives in about thirty boroughs, where the right of voting is confined to corporate officers alone; a deprivation the more unjustifiable, because, though considered as unworthy to vote, they are deemed capable of being elected, and may be the representatives of the very places for which they are disqualified from

being the electors.—A man possessed of one thousand pounds per annum, or any other sum, arising from copyhold, leasehold for ninety-nine years, trade, property in the public funds, or even freehold in the city of London, and many other cities and towns having peculiar jurisdictions, is not thereby entitled to vote. Here again a strange distinction is taken between electing and representing, as a copyhold is a sufficient qualification to sit in your honourable House.—A man paying taxes to any amount, how great soever, for his domestic establishment, does not thereby obtain a right to vote, unless his residence be in some borough where that right is vested in the inhabitants. This exception operates in sixty places, of which twenty-eight do not contain three hundred voters each, and the number of householders in England and Wales (exclusive of Scotland), who pay all taxes, is 714,911, and of householders who pay all taxes, but the house and window taxes, is 284,459, as appears by a return made to your honourable House in 1785; so that even supposing the sixty places above mentioned to contain, one with another, one thousand voters in each, there will remain 939,370 householders who have no voice in the representation, unless they have obtained it by accident or by purchase. Neither their contributions to the public burdens, their peaceable demeanour as good subjects, nor their general respectability and merits as useful citizens, afford them, as the law now stands, the smallest pretensions to participate in the choice of those, who, under the name of their representatives, may dispose of their fortunes and liberties.—In Scotland, the grievance arising from the nature of the rights of voting, has a different and still more intolerable operation. In that great and populous division of the kingdom, not only the great mass of the householders, but of the landholders also, are excluded from all participation in the choice of representatives. By the remains of the feudal system in the counties, the vote is severed from the land, and attached to what is called the superiority. In other words, it is taken from the substance, and transferred to the shadow; because, though each of these superiorities must, with very few exceptions, arise from lands of the present annual value of four hundred pounds sterling, yet it is not necessary that the lands should do no more than give a name to the superiority, the possessor of which may retain the right of voting notwith-

standing he be divested of the property. And on the other hand, great landholders have the means afforded them by the same system, of adding to their influence, without expense to themselves, by communicating to their confidential friends the privilege of electing members to serve in parliament. The process by which this operation is performed is simple. He who wishes to increase the number of his dependent votes, surrenders his charter to the crown, and, parcelling out his estate into as many lots of four hundred pounds per annum, as may be convenient, conveys them to such as he can confide in. To these, new charters are, upon application, granted by the crown, so as to erect each of them into a superiority, which privilege once obtained, the land itself is reconveyed to the original granter; and thus the representatives of the landed interest in Scotland may be chosen by those who have no real or beneficial interest in the land.—Such is the situation in which the counties of Scotland are placed. With respect to the burghs, every thing that bears even the semblance of popular choice, has long been done away. The election of members to serve in Parliament is vested in the magistrates and town councils, who, having by various innovations, constituted themselves into self-elected bodies, instead of officers freely chosen by the inhabitants at large, have deprived the people of all participation in that privilege, the free exercise of which affords the only security they can possess for the protection of their liberties and property.—The fourth and last complaint of your Petitioners is the length of the duration of Parliament. Your honourable House knows, that by the ancient laws and statutes of this kingdom frequent parliaments ought to be held; and that the sixth of William and Mary, c. 2. (since repealed) speaking while the spirit of the revolution was yet warm, declared, that “frequent and new parliaments tend very much to the happy union and good agreement between king and people; and enacted, that no parliament should last longer than three years. Your Petitioners, without presuming to add to such an authority by any observations of their own, humbly pray that parliaments may not be continued for seven years.—Your Petitioners have thus laid before you the specific ground of complaint, from which they conceive every evil in the representation to spring, and on which they think every abuse and inconvenience

is founded.—What those abuses are, and how great that inconvenience is, it becomes your Petitioners to state, as the best means of justifying their present application to your honourable House.—

Your Petitioners then affirm, that from the combined operation of the defects they have pointed out, arise those scenes of confusion, litigation, and expense, which so disgrace the name, and that extensive system of private patronage which is so repugnant to the spirit of free representation.—Your Petitioners entreat of your honourable House to consider the manner in which elections are conducted, and to reflect upon the extreme inconvenience to which electors are exposed, and the intolerable expense to which candidates are subjected.—Your honourable House knows that tumults, disorders, outrages, and perjury, are too often the dreadful attendants on contested elections, as at this time carried on.—Your honourable House knows that polls are only taken in one fixed place for each county, city, and borough, whether the number of voters be ten or ten thousand, and whether they be resident or dispersed over England.—

Your honourable House knows that polls, however few the electors, may by law be continued for fifteen days, and even then be subjected to a scrutiny.—Your honourable House knows that the management and conduct of polls is committed to returning officers, who, from the very nature of the proceedings, must be invested with extensive and discretionary powers, and who, it appears by every volume of your journals, have but too often exercised those powers with the most gross partiality, and the most scandalous corruption.—Of elections, arranged with such little regard to the accommodation of the parties, acknowledged to require such a length of time to complete, and trusted to the superintendence of such suspicious agents, your Petitioners might easily draw out a detail of the expense. But it is unnecessary. The fact is too notorious to require proof, that scarce an instance can be produced where a member has obtained a disputed seat in parliament at a less cost than from two to five thousand pounds; particular cases are not wanting where ten times these sums have been paid; but it is sufficient for your Petitioners to affirm, and to be able to prove it if denied, that such is the expense of a contested return, that he who should become a candidate with even greater funds than the laws

require him to swear to as his qualification to sit in your honourable House, must either relinquish his pretensions on the appearance of opposition, or so reduce his fortune in the contest, that he could not take his seat without perjury.—The revision of the original polls before the committees of your honourable House, upon appeals from the decisions of the returning officers, affords a fresh source of vexation and expense to all parties. Your honourable House knows, that the complicated rights of voting, and the shameful practices which disgrace election proceedings, have so loaded your table with Petitions for judgment and redress, that one half of the usual duration of a parliament has scarcely been sufficient to settle who is entitled to sit for the other half; and it was not till within the last two months that your honourable House had an opportunity of discovering, that the two gentlemen, who sat and voted near three years as the representatives of the borough of Stockbridge, had procured themselves to be elected by the most scandalous bribery; and that the two gentlemen, who sat and voted during as long a period for the borough of Great Grimsby, had not been elected at all.—In truth, all the mischiefs of the present system of representation are ascertained by the difficulties which even the zeal and wisdom of your honourable House experience in attending to the variety of complaints brought before you. Though your committee sit five hours every day from the time of their appointment, they generally are unable to come to a decision in less than a fortnight, and very frequently are detained from thirty to forty days. The Westminster case in 1789, will even furnish your honourable House with an instance, where, after deliberating forty-five days, a committee gravely resolved, that, “From an attentive consideration of the circumstances relating to the cause, a final decision of the business before them could not take place in the course of the session, and that not improbably the whole of the parliament” (having at that time near two years longer to sit) “might be consumed in a tedious and expensive litigation;” and they recommended it to the Petitioners to withdraw their Petition, which, after a fruitless perseverance of above three months, they were actually obliged to submit to.—Your Petitioners will only upon this subject farther add, that the expense to each of the parties who have been either plaintiff or defendant in

Petitions tried before your honourable House in the present session, has, upon an average, amounted to above one hundred pounds per day; and that the Attorneys' bills in one cause, the trial of which in point of form only lasted two days, and in point of fact only six hours, amounted to very near twelve hundred pounds. And this your Petitioners are ready to prove.

—Your Petitioners must now beg leave to call the attention of your honourable House to the greatest evil produced by these defects in the representation of which they complain, namely, the extent of PRIVATE PARLIAMENTARY PATRONAGE; an abuse which obviously tends to exclude the great mass of the people from any substantial influence in the election of the House of Commons, and which in its progress threatens to usurp the sovereignty of the country, to the equal danger of the king, of the lords, and of the commons.—The patronage of which your Petitioners complain, is of *two* kinds: *That* which arises from the unequal distribution of the elective franchise, and the peculiar rights of voting by which certain places return members to serve in parliaments; and *that* which arises from the expense attending contested elections, and the consequent degree of power acquired by wealth.—By these two means, a weight of parliamentary influence has been obtained by certain individuals, forbidden by the spirit of the laws, and in its consequences most dangerous to the liberties of the people of Great Britain.—The operation of the *first* species of patronage is direct, and subject to positive proof. Eighty-four individuals do, by their own immediate authority, send one hundred and fifty-seven of your honourable members to parliament. And this your Petitioners are ready, if the fact be disputed, to prove, and to name the members and the patrons.—The *second* species of patronage cannot be shewn with equal accuracy, though it is felt with equal force.—Your Petitioners are convinced, that in addition to the one hundred and fifty-seven honourable members above mentioned, one hundred and fifty more, making in the whole three hundred and seven, are returned to your honourable House, not by the collective voice of those whom they appear to represent, but by the recommendation of seventy powerful individuals, added to the eighty-four before mentioned, and making the total number of patrons altogether only one hundred and fifty-four, who return a decided majority of your honourable House.—If your honourable

House will accept as evidence the common report and general belief of the counties, cities, and boroughs, which return the members alluded to, your Petitioners are ready to name them, and to prove the fact; or if the members in question can be made parties to the inquiry, your Petitioners will name them, and be governed by the testimony which they themselves shall publicly give. But if neither of these proofs be thought consistent with the proceedings of your honourable House, then your Petitioners can only assert their belief of the fact, which they hereby do in the most solemn manner, and on the most deliberate conviction.—Your Petitioners entreat your honourable House to believe that, in complaining of this species of influence, it is not their intention or desire to decry or to condemn that just and natural attachment, which they, who are enabled by their fortune, and inclined by their disposition, to apply great means to honourable and benevolent ends, will always ensure to themselves. What your Petitioners complain of is, that property, whether well or ill employed, has equal power; that the present system of representation gives to it a degree of weight which renders it independent of character; which enables it to excite fear as well as to procure respect, and which confines the choice of electors, within the ranks of opulence, because, though it cannot make riches the sole object of their affection and confidence, it can and does throw obstacles, almost insurmountable, in the way of every man who is not rich; and thereby secures to a select few the capability of becoming candidates themselves, or supporting the pretensions of others. Of this your Petitioners complain loudly, because they conceive it to be highly unjust, that while the language of the law requires from a candidate no greater estate, as a qualification, than a few hundred pounds per annum, the operation of the law should disqualify every man whose rental is not extended to thousands; and that, at the same time that the legislature appears to give the electors a choice from amongst those who possess a moderate and independent competence, it should virtually compel them to choose from amongst those who themselves abound in wealth, or are supported by the wealth of others.—Your Petitioners are the more alarmed at the progress of private patronage, because it is rapidly leading to consequences which menace the very existence of the constitution.—At the commencement of every session

of parliament, your honourable House, acting up to the laudable jealousy of your predecessors, and speaking the pure, constitutional language of a British House of Commons resolve, as appears by your journals, "That no peer of this realm hath any right to give his vote in the election of any member to serve in parliament;" and also, "That it is a high infringement upon the liberties and privileges of the Commons of Great Britain, for any Lord of Parliament, or any Lord-lieutenant of any county, to concern themselves in the elections of members to serve for the Commons in Parliament."—Your Petitioners inform your honourable House, and are ready to prove it at your bar, that they have the most reasonable grounds to suspect *that no less than one hundred and fifty of your honourable members owe their elections entirely to the interference of Peers*; and your Petitioners are prepared to shew by legal evidence, *that forty Peers, in defiance of your resolutions, have possessed themselves of so many burgage tenures, and obtained such an absolute and uncontroled command in very many small boroughs in the kingdom, as to be enabled by their own positive authority to return eighty-one of your honourable members.*—Your Petitioners will, however, urge this grievance of the interference of peers in elections no farther, because they are satisfied that it is unnecessary. Numbers of your honourable members must individually have known the fact, but collectively your honourable House has undoubtedly been a stranger to it. It is now brought before you by those who tender evidence of the truth of what they assert, and they conceive it would be improper in them to ask that by petition, which must be looked for as the certain result of your own honourable attachment to your own liberties and privileges.—Your Petitioners have thus laid before your honourable House, what the mischiefs are which arise from the present state of the representation, and what they conceive to be the grounds of those mischiefs, and therefore pray to have removed.—They now humbly beg leave to offer their reasons, why they are anxious that some remedy should be immediately applied.—Your Petitioners trust they may be allowed to state, because they are ready to prove, that seats in your honourable House are sought for at a most extravagant and increasing rate of expense.—What can have so much augmented the ambition to sit in your honourable House, your petitioners do not presume accurately

to have discovered; but the means taken by candidates to obtain, and by electors to bestow that honour, evidently appear to have been increasing in a progressive degree of fraud and corruption. Your petitioners are induced to make this assertion by the legislature having found it necessary, during the last and present reigns so much to swell the statute book with laws for the prevention of those offences.

—As far as conjecture can lead your petitioners, they must suppose that the increasing national debt, and the consequent increase of influence, are the causes of the increased eagerness of individuals to become members of the House of Commons, and of their indifference as to the means used to gratify their speculations. To prove that they do not state this wantonly, or without substantial grounds, they humbly beg to call your attention to the following table, all the vouchers for which are to be found in the journal of your honourable House, or in different Acts of Parliament.—It is upon this evidence of the increase of taxes, establishments and influence, and the increase of laws found necessary to repel the increasing attacks upon the purity and freedom of elections, that your Petitioners conceive it high time to inquire into the premises.—Your Petitioners are confident that in what they have stated, they are supported by the evidence of facts, and they trust that, in conveying those facts to your honourable House, they have not been betrayed into the language of reproach or disrespect. Anxious to preserve in its purity a constitution they love and admire, they have thought it their duty to lay before you, not general speculations deduced from theoretical opinions, but positive truths susceptible of direct proof; and if in the performance of this task, they have been obliged to call your attention to assertions which you have not been accustomed to hear, and which they lament that they are compelled to make, they entreat the indulgence of your honourable House.—Your Petitioners will only further trespass upon your time, while they recapitulate the objects of their prayer, which are,—That your honourable House will be pleased to take such measures, as to your wisdom may seem meet, to remove the evils arising from the unequal manner in which the different parts of the kingdom are admitted to participate in the representation.—To correct the partial distribution of the elective franchise, which commits the

choice of representatives to select bodies of men of such limited numbers, as renders them an easy prey to the artful, or a ready purchase to the wealthy.—To regulate the right of voting upon an uniform and equitable principle.—And, finally, to shorten the duration of Parliaments, and by removing the causes of that confusion, litigation and expense, with which they are at this day conducted, to render frequent and new elections, what our ancestors at the revolution asserted them to be, the means of a happy union and good agreement between the king and people.—And your petitioners shall ever pray.”

To the allegations in this Petition, which were never contradicted, I shall only add the facts relating to the charge brought against PERCEVAL and his associates Castlereagh and H. Wellesley, in 1809; which facts were as follows: That, on the 11th of May, in the last mentioned year, Mr. Madocks rose in his place in the House of Commons, and made a charge in the following words.—“ I affirm, that Mr. DICK *purchased a seat in the House of Commons* for the borough of Cashel, through the agency of the Honourable HENRY WELLESLEY, who acted for, and on behalf of, the Treasury; that, upon a recent question of the last importance, when Mr. Dick had determined to vote according to his conscience, the noble Lord, CASTLEREAGH, did intimate to that gentleman the necessity of either his *voting with the Government, or resigning his seat in that House*; and that Mr. Dick, sooner than vote against principle, did make choice of the latter alternative, and vacated his seat accordingly. To this transaction I charge the Right Honourable Gentleman, Mr. PERCEVAL, as being privy, and having *connived at it*. This I will ENGAGE TO PROVE BY WITNESSES AT YOUR BAR, if the House will give me leave to call them.”—That, at the end of a debate, which ensued upon this, the question was taken upon a motion FOR AN INQUIRY into the matter; there appears, from the report, to have been 395 members present; and, out of the 395, 85 voted for the motion, which, of course, was lost, there being *three hundred and ten* out of three hundred and ninety five, who voted AGAINST THE INQUIRY.

Now let the world judge!

SUMMARY OF POLITICS.

NORTHERN WAR.—If I had room, I

should again press upon those who have power to treat, to lose no time in offering Napoleon terms of peace, though I begin to fear, that the golden opportunity is gone, never to return. The terms, which offended us, only a few months ago, appeared to me, for the reasons I then gave, to be perfectly fair and equitable; and, indeed, such as I could not possibly trace to any source, other than that of his doubts as to success against Russia; and, therefore, I must lament, that they were not accepted of; for, if success attend him in the North, it would be an insult to common sense to affect to believe, that we shall ever hear of such terms again.—As to the war in the Southern Peninsula, that will follow the fortunes of the war in the North; because, when once the French armies are let loose from their present enterprise, they will pour in upon Spain like a deluge; and, if they be defeated in the North, the contest in Spain will soon be decided against France.—My opinion is, however, that Napoleon will succeed; that he will bring the Czar to his terms; and that he will next bend his course towards Portugal, and afford the King's German Legion another opportunity to “distinguish themselves.”—They may beat him; it is possible; but, IF THEY SHOULD NOT! If they should not beat him? Why, then it will be time for us to begin to look about us; unless, like the Russians, we are made to believe, that the advance of the enemy and the retreat of our own troops are proofs of his being defeated. Accompanying their last Bulletins, the French have given the world a specimen of the way, in which the Russian People are gulled. But, really, they are not more completely gulled than are the people of England, who believe *just what the Russians believe*, and who will never be undeceived, till they actually see the treaty, which Napoleon will make with the Czar.

CANADA.—The Governor of Upper Canada has, it appears, assembled the Legislature, in consequence of the American invasion. He, in his speech to them, talks in a pretty high strain of the *loyalty* and *devotion* of the people; but, he calls upon the Legislature for A SUSPENSION OF THE LAWS OF PERSONAL SAFETY. He says, that he wants an act “to restrain for a limited period the liberty of individuals;” and in this, he says, he is warranted by “the history and experience of the mother country.”—This would be all

in regular course, only the Governor talks, in the very same breath, of the *loyalty and zeal of the people!* But, amidst all this, it does creep out, that "A FEW TRAITORS have already joined the enemy." What! Traitors in Canada! Traitors! A few, a few, only a few! Well, then, why suspend the Habeas Corpus Act?—But, no more. A little time will, I am certain, unriddle the mystery.

WM. COBBETT.

Bolley, 30th September, 1812.

OFFICIAL PAPERS.

NORTHERN WAR.—*Fourteenth Bulletin of the French Grand Army.*—(Continued from page 414.)

vitsch, and the General of Artillery Aubry, who directed the artillery of the 2d corps with great distinction. General Merle, with only a part of his division, repulsed with great skill an attack which the enemy made on our left, to protect their retreat to the wood. The Croats distinguished themselves in this charge, supported by a part of General Castex's cavalry. In general I demand the consideration of his Majesty; the troops have merited encouragement and rewards. His Majesty will give me great pleasure by dispensing his favour on M. de Maille, my Aid-de-Camp, the bearer of this letter, whose zeal I have every reason for praising. I have also nothing but eulogiums to bestow upon the Chiefs of the 2d and 6th corps.—I have the honour to be, your Highness's most obedient and very humble servant,

COUNT GAUVION SAINT CYR.

Report of the Prince of Eckmuhl to the Prince Major-General Doubrowna, the 7th Aug.

Monseigneur,—I have the honour to lay before your Highness the report of the affair which took place on the 23d July, in front of Mohilow, between a part of the troops belonging to the 1st corps, and the Russian corps under Prince Bagration.—I entered Mohilow on the 20th, and on the 21st the 3d regiment of chasseurs were attacked by the van-guard of Prince Bagration, who wished to occupy this important town. The regiment lost 100 men, and were driven out.—On the 22d I placed in position the 83d regiment of infantry of

the line, commanded by Gen. Frederick. General Bagration was arrived at Novoi Brickow; he intended giving battle, in order to enter Mohilow; he had four divisions of infantry, 5,000 Cossacks, and 8,000 cavalry, being in the whole 35,000 men. I had at Mohilow only the 57th, 61st, and 111th regiments of the division of Campans (the 23d, together with the brigade of Pajol and the 1st of chasseurs, I had left on the Berezhira to cover Minsk), the 85th and the 108th of the division Desaix, General Valence's division of cuirassiers, and the third of horse chasseurs.—The position of Salta Naecka, of which I herewith transmit your Highness a sketch, appeared to me a proper place for duly receiving the enemy. In the night of the 22d, I caused the bridge which lies on the grand route to be barricadoed, and destroyed the inn which is situated next to it. The mill-bridge on the right was cut by a company of sappers, and the houses in the neighbourhood pulled down. The 85th was charged with the defence of these posts, and in case of being attacked, to keep them, in order to give time for the other troops stationed between this place and Mohilow to arrive.—These dispositions being taken, I myself retired to Mohilow, to press the arrival of the division Clapere de, and of the troops detached by General Pajol.—On the 23d, at 7 o'clock in the morning, I received a report of the advanced posts being attacked. At eight o'clock I found the 83d regiment very spiritedly attacked; General Frederick, who commanded it, had taken good dispositions, and during the whole of the day has shewn much coolness and great intrepidity. The light artillery of his division, and that of the 85th, had been disposed on the preceding evening.—Their fire was very mischievous, and in about an hour after the combat had begun they had already killed above 500 Russians. Twelve or fifteen pieces of Russian artillery came out of the wood, and were ranged in order of battle on the mill plain, where the bridge had been destroyed. The Russian regiments of infantry formed themselves. A battalion of the 108th was sent to sustain the companies of the 85th, which were on the bridge. Some pieces of artillery were opposed to those of the Russians.—The combat became exceedingly lively on this side, and the enemy's force increased with every moment. The battalion of the 108th, which had repulsed the Russians, was obliged to yield to numbers. General Gu-

yardet, with two battalions of the 61st, stopped the enemy's pursuit, and caused the Russians to repass the ravine, who had crossed it in pursuing the battalion of the 108th.—Whilst these things were passing on the right, I gave orders to General Frederick, who defended the debouche of the great road with much vigour, to cause one battalion of the 108th and some companies of the 85th, to pass the defile and charge the enemy's cannon. This movement, which was executed with great precision, and directed by Colonel Achard, of the 108th regiment, had a great effect on the motions of the enemy's left, which found itself obliged to make a retrograde movement. The battalion commanded by Colonel Achard had taken prisoners one of the enemy's battalions, but which was afterwards delivered. The Colonel was wounded by a ball across his arm, and could not sustain himself on the heights which he had occupied.—The enemy had caused a considerable body to advance, formed in a close column, again to undertake forcing the defile of the bridge. This found itself in the direction of the Chef D'Escadron Polmey, who had stopped it by a very lively fire, and caused it to sustain a great loss. The enemy's number in dead, which at this point was very considerable, was thereby doubled.—The action was continued with great heat on both sides, and with a great inferiority on our side.—The other troops were in reserve on our right, where it was to be presumed that the enemy would bring forward his force, and more especially his numerous cavalry. Towards six o'clock in the evening all my reconnoitring parties on the right not having seen the enemy, the troops which had been there kept in reserve, and in particular the 111th, were directed to take the great road. General Frederick received orders to renew his attack.—A battalion of the 35th, which since evening had been placed at the extremity of the right wing, and one of the 61st, attacked the left of the enemy. The two attacks were attended with success. The enemy drew back his artillery, and his troops followed the movement at all points.—The 111th regiment and the 61st of the 5th division, led by General Compans, were charged to pursue the enemy as far as Novosieleke; the night put an end to the pursuit at this place. I owe the greatest eulogiums to the conduct of the troops, and particularly to that of the 85th regiment. Not one soldier ever quitted his post to con-

duct the wounded, and both the young soldiers and the old ones have shewn the greatest valour. The ancient soldiers have given their youthful comrades the honourable testimonial of not having any conscripts more in their regiments.—The loss of the enemy has been great. They left more than 1,200 dead on the field of battle, exclusive of leaving 4,000 wounded, 7 or 800 of whom have remained in our hands.—Our loss, according to the state of the corps, amounts to 900 men killed, wounded, and made prisoners.—I reiterate the eulogies which I owe to the conduct of General Frederick, to all the Officers of the General Staff, who have paid well in their persons. One of them, Aid-de-Camp to General Haxo, was killed.—I take advantage of this occasion to beg your Highness would request his Majesty to grant recompenses to several of them, and herewith join the state of them to that of the officers, sub-officers, and privates of the 4th and 5th divisions, who have merited to be cited with distinction. I solicit your Highness to lay these statements before his Majesty, and to request his favour in their behalf.

I am, &c. &c.

THE MARSHAL PRINCE D'ECKMUHL.

Report of the General Staff of the Austrian Army.

The enemy, forced into the defile of Kasibrad, marched the whole of the night, between the 10th and 11th, towards Horodetzka; he was joined on his retreat by the troops which he had drawn from Kobryn, as likewise by the detachment of Knorring, and after having passed the defile of Horodetska, he placed himself on the heights beyond that place.—The right flank and the front of this position were covered by a morass, which was impassable for more than a thousand paces in breadth, and left only two points open to get at the enemy; that is the dike, which at Horodetzka forms the post road. This post is near to that of Podubno, its left touched this last village, and he had cut up, by his artillery, the entrance to the two defiles.—On the 11th I marched to Horodetzka, and occupied the head of the defile: the 7th corps, reinforced by two regiments of cavalry and two batteries upon Czaba. They reconnoitred the enemy. The reports of prisoners and deserters state their force at 50,000. They certainly were at least 35,000, with 60 pieces of cannon. Tormasow commanded in person. General Regnier, who was

charged with reconnoitring the left of the enemy, found that they had neglected to occupy Podubno, and that their left wing was content with observing a wood through which the road passes from Szewszen to Kobryn, in place of leaning upon that town. He made haste in taking advantage of this double fault, in taking possession of Podubno, with a division of chasseurs; and it was agreed between us, that he should debouch with the 7th corps, and reinforcements which I had assigned him, by the wood to attack and turn the enemy's left, whilst I should support his movements by feigned attacks upon Horodetzka and Podubno. At the same time, Sieginthal's division, previously detached to Malitz, leaving a battalion and some cavalry to observe that part, to protect our rear, and conceal our march from the enemy, rejoined the corps d'armée, and was placed in reserve of the 7th near Szabra.—On the 12th, we remarked at break of day, that the enemy, from whom none of our movements could be concealed, because they occupied the commanding heights, had placed the greater part of their forces opposite the debouche of Podubno, and whilst the 7th corps, to which was joined Lelienburg's brigade, commenced its movements towards the wood upon its left, and hastily formed with the second line a parallel flank to the debouches from that wood.—About ten in the morning, the 7th corps reached the skirts of the wood, and rapidly advanced to gain the ground necessary for deploying, which it effected in the greatest order under a continual and dreadful fire from the enemy, who, on his part, did not cease to reinforce and extend their flank, that it touched our right, which took from us all hope of turning it, reducing all our efforts to repulse their reiterated attacks, and driving them back upon their centre.—The battle quickly became general at Floraditzva, Podubno, and upon all the right. It was contested with great slaughter; the enemy redoubled their efforts and made several very brisk attacks to drive us into the wood; they were constantly repulsed with loss; I seized the critical moment, when their attack upon our right was briskest, to pass over the marsh, which they considered impracticable, a battalion of Colloredo, above and on the right of Podubno. This battalion effected its passage in front, up to their knees in mire, scaled the opposite heights, and impetuously attacked the enemy who were on its summit. This unexpected attack on the

flank facilitated that of our right, which, quickly reinforced by the 2d battalion of Colloredo, was not long in repulsing the enemy to the height of Podubno.—They nevertheless attempted, at the extremity of the left, a last effort, and made with a mass of cavalry, very superior, a dernier attack upon that of our right, which firmly expected it, and whilst the Austrian cavalry took them in flank, Polentz's Saxon brigade charged them in front, and instantly drove them behind their infantry. Night put an end to the battle; the enemy took advantage of it to file off his artillery and main part of his troops upon Kobryn, and abandoned to us the field of battle; another hour's day-light, they would have lost their communication and been drove upon the marshes.—On the 13th I pursued, with all the cavalry and light artillery, the enemy's van-guard, composed of from 7 to 8,000 cavalry, and dismounted chasseurs, with some artillery. We found upon the field of battle a great number of dead and dying, and notwithstanding the celerity of our pursuit, we could not reach the rear-guard till near the village of Strichou, where it made a demonstration of defending itself; but they were instantly overthrown, and owed their salvation alone to the marshes, which in these countries intersect in a parallel direction from place to place their roads, and form so many defiles, that it is impossible to come near them.—About one o'clock we arrived at Kobryn; the enemy had deployed a numerous cavalry before that town; some discharges of artillery were sufficient to drive them away. On retiring, they set fire to the bridge of Muchaven; our tirailleurs arrived in sufficient time to preserve it.—Bianchi's division occupies Kobryn; the 7th corps is encamped on the right; the Austrians on the left of that town, behind the Muchaven; the enemy are in full retreat towards Ratno and its marches.—The different reports not having reached me, I cannot very exactly estimate the enemy's loss. It at least amounts to 3,000 men killed and wounded, and 500 prisoners; that on our side consists of 1,000 men killed or wounded.

Biraeing, near Kobryn, Aug. 13, 1812.

Reports from the Staff of the 7th Corps.

REPORT OF AUG. 11.

The 7th corps set out from Pruszany at noon, to pass the defile of Kosebrod after the Austrian divisions which marched upon

Horodetzka. After having passed the defile at Kosebrod, it took the road of Bizese by Zabra, where it took a position. At the commencement of night the advanced guard advanced to Podubno, and occupied the small dike which crosses the marshes to the firm ground at Podubno, and which is not passable for artillery; it drove off the enemy's posts of cavalry which observed the passage, and established posts in advance of the marsh, which extend from beyond Horodetzka to the entry of the wood of Podubno.

REPORT OF THE 12TH OF AUGUST.

The reconnoitrings sent early into the wood of Podubuc, on the roads of Brzesc and Twele occupied the debouche of the wood upon the two roads, and made some Russian Uhlans prisoners at Kiwatice. Some patrols of infantry, passing the marshes by Zabia, took several of the enemy's horsemen, who were seeking their horses, which had run off during the night into the marshes. At eight in the morning, a strong column of the enemy's infantry, which it was afterwards known was the 9th and 15th divisions, with a brigade of cavalry, appeared on the heights between Zambosc and the farm of Podubuc, attacked the posts that had passed the dike which crosses the marshes, and forced them to fall back to the entrance of the dike: this column formed upon the heights, placed there in battery 30 pieces of cannon, and sent infantry into the marshes to possess themselves of the dike which the advanced guard defended.—The corps d'armée began its march to support the advanced guard, placed itself before Podubuc, and forced the enemy to give up the attack of the dike. The advanced guard, composed of a battalion of light infantry, a battalion of light artillery, hussars, the light horse of Polentz, and Saxon lancers, supported by the Austrian regiments of light horse of Hohenzollern and Orcily, sent by the Prince of Schwartzenberg, put itself in march to turn the marsh, traversed the wood, which the enemy had only caused to be observed by the regiment of dragoons of Czernikowski and Uhlans Tartars, and placed itself at the debouche of this wood on the road to Twele.—The first division of the 7th corps followed the movements of its advanced guard about ten o'clock, and the second division followed it to the entrance of the wood as soon as the Austrian division of General Siegenthal arrived to replace it at

Podubuc. When the advanced guard, after having debouched from the wood, appeared on the flank and rear of the enemy, they caused a part of the 9th and 15th divisions to change its front, and directed on the advanced guard the fire of a numerous artillery, which dismounted several pieces of the two batteries of Saxon and Austrian light artillery.—The arrival of the first division with other artillery, supported the advanced guard; it extended itself behind the left of the enemy. The brigade of Austrian infantry of General Sillenberg, sent by the Prince Schwartzenberg to General Regnier, placed itself between the left of the first division and the extremity of the wood: that General was soon afterwards wounded, and Lieutenant-General Bianchi took the command of this brigade.—The second Saxon division, composed only of the brigade of General Saar, also passed the wood, and placed itself before the left of the Austrian brigade: it was soon attacked by the enemy, who endeavoured to take the wood. This brigade repulsed several attacks, and was seconded by the Austrian troops which occupied Podubuc, and sent tirailleurs into the marshes. It endeavoured, after having repulsed the attacks of the enemy upon the wood, to possess itself of the heights which command the dike of Podubuc.—This brigade was supported by two batteries of six pieces of cannon each, and the fire of the artillery of the first division, as also by that of the Austrian batteries placed near Podubuc; but this was the point which the enemy most obstinately defended, because they feared that if they abandoned it, the Austrian troops which were at Podubuc might pass the marshes and augment the forces which were on their flank and rear. They continually directed fresh troops against the brigade of General Saar.—A regiment of dragoons charged the second regiment of Saxon light infantry, which immediately formed with the greatest order in square, and repulsed the charge. During this time the cavalry of the advanced guard extended towards the right, nearly to the great road to Kobryn, and connected itself with the first division, which was in the same direction; but which could not advance so far.—The enemy's cavalry extended from the elevated plain of Podubuc to Zawanies, on the road to Kobryn, and was supported by a numerous artillery and by a part of the enemy's 13th division, which remained in the morning before Horodetzka, and had come to take position at some distance from

the left of the 15th division. All this line was furnished with a very numerous artillery. The enemy's cavalry attempted a charge against the right of the cavalry, but was repulsed by the regiment of Austrian dragoons of Hohenzollern, and the Saxon light horse of Polentz, which made a very fine charge, and took several prisoners.—A moment after this charge General Frelich arrived to reinforce the cavalry of the right with two Austrian regiments of hussars. Towards evening, General Regnier caused a new effort to be made by the brigade of General Saar, to possess himself of the elevated plain of Podubuc. He caused this to be supported by an Austrian battalion of the division of General Bianchi and the tirailleurs of the first division, while the tirailleurs of the troops, which the Prince of Schwartzberg had at Podubuc, traversed the marshes.—The elevated plain was taken possession of, but night terminated the combat, and prevented the enemy, who had then begun their retreat, from being pursued. At the same time the cavalry had orders to send out several parties and patrols towards Twele, on the road to Kobryn, and a commissary was taken, who confirmed the retreat of the enemy.

REPORT OF THE 13TH OF AUGUST.

At five in the morning, the troops began their march to attack the enemy, who were retreating on the road of Kobryn, but who had still a rear-guard on the heights between Horodetzka and Zanrlym. The right of the cavalry, which was reinforced by the Austrian regiment of dragoons of Levenchr, took its direction upon Twele, and placed itself to the left of this village, in order to cut off the retreat of the enemy, who were in haste to effect it, and were briskly cannonaded on the road till the cavalry had entered Twele, where the enemy had a rear-guard of infantry, which retired as soon as it saw this movement.—The Prince of Schwartzberg then caused the cavalry of the enemy, which was between Twele and Sulkow, to be charged, and they were pursued, retiring in the greatest disorder upon Kobryn, where, however, they did not dare to stop. A regiment of infantry, which was at Kobryn, behind the Muchawice, and had begun to burn the bridge, fled on the arrival of the hussars and Saxon light artillery. Two batteries, served by Saxon gunners on foot, which had been advanced in the morning, along with the cavalry, arrived at Kobryn as

soon as the light artillery.—A great number of the enemy were killed and taken in this pursuit. Exact accounts, by which to estimate their loss in the actions of the 12th and 13th, have not yet been obtained, because the field of battle was very extensive, and the prisoners are not collected, but it cannot be estimated at less than 3,000 in killed, wounded, and prisoners.—The inhabitants of Kobryn say, that a great number of wounded have passed through that place, and many still remain on the field of battle. Statements of the loss of the 7th corps have not yet been made out, but it may be estimated at 1,000 killed or wounded.—The Saxon troops displayed the greatest bravery; the brigade of General Saar fought and attacked with infinite vigour, and the division of General Lacoq supported with calmness a very great fire of artillery. The tirailleurs march with ardour upon the enemy. The artillery was perfectly well directed, and well sustained the fire of the enemy, who had a superior artillery, of which many pieces were dismounted.—The General Commander in Chief of the 7th corps of the Grand Army,
Kobryn, Aug. 13. REGNIER.

BATTLE OF SALAMANCA. — *Report of Marshal the Duke of Ragusa to the Minister at War.—Tudela, July 31.*

Monsieur—The interruption of the communications with France since the opening of the campaign having prevented me from giving you the successive accounts of the events which have passed, I shall commence this Report from the moment at which the English began operations; and I am going to have the honour to place before you in detail all the movements, which have been executed, to the unhappy event that has just taken place, and which we were far from expecting.—In the month of May, I was informed the English army would open the campaign with very powerful means. I informed the King of it, in order that he might adopt such dispositions as he thought proper, and I likewise acquainted General Caffarelli with it, that he might take measures for sending me succours when the moment should have arrived.—The extreme difficulty in procuring subsistence, and the impossibility of provisioning the troops when assembled, prevented me from having more than 8 or 9 battalions in Salamanca, but all were in readiness to join me in a few days.—On

the 12th June the enemy's army passed the Agueda: on the 14th, in the morning, I was informed of it, and the order for assembling was given to the troops. On the 16th the English army arrived before Salamanca.—In the night between the 16th and 17th I evacuated that town, leaving, nevertheless, a garrison in the forts I had constructed, and which, by the extreme activity used in their construction, were in a state of defence. I marched six leagues from Salamanca, and then having collected five divisions, I approached that town; I drove before me the English advanced posts, and obliged the enemy's army to shew what attitude it reckoned upon taking; it appeared determined to fight upon the fine rising ground and strong position of San Christoval. The remainder of the army joined me; I manœuvred round that position, but I acquired the certainty that it every where presented obstacles difficult to be conquered, and that it was better to force the enemy to come upon another field of battle, than enter into action with them upon ground which gave them too many advantages; besides, different reasons made me desire to prolong the operations—for I had just received a letter from General Caffarelli, which announced to me that he had collected his troops, and was going to march to succour me, whilst my presence would have suspended the siege of the fort of Salamanca. Things remained in this state for some days, and the armies in presence of each other, when the siege of the fort of Salamanca vigorously recommenced. On account of the trifling distance which there was between the French army and the place, and by means of the signals agreed upon, I was every day informed of the situation of the place. Those on the 26th and 27th, informed me that the fort could hold out five days; then I decided to execute the passage of the Tormes, and act upon the left bank. The fort of Alba, which I had carefully preserved, gave me a passage over that river, a new line of operations, and an important point of support. I made dispositions for executing this passage on the night between the 28th and 29th. During the night of the 27th, the fire redoubled, and the enemy, fatigued with a resistance which to them appeared exaggerated, fired red-hot balls upon the fort. Unfortunately its magazines contained a large quantity of wood, it took fire, and in an instant the fort was in flames. It was impossible for the brave garrison who defended it to support, at the

same time the enemy's attacks and the fire which destroyed their defences, magazines, and provisions, and placed the soldiers themselves in the most dreadful situation. It was then obliged to surrender at discretion, after having had the honour of repulsing two assaults, and causing the enemy a loss of more 1,300 men, viz. double their own force. This event happened on the 28th at noon.—The enemy having no further object by this operation, past the Tormes, and on the contrary, every thing indicating that it would be prudent to await the reinforcements announced in a formal manner by the army of the North, I decided on re-approaching the Douro, and passing that river in case the enemy should march towards us, and there to take up a good line of defence until such time as the moment for acting on the offensive should appear. On the 28th, the army departed and took a position on the Guarena, on the 29th, on the Trabanjos, where it sojourned.—The enemy having followed the movement with the whole of his forces, the army took a position on the Zopardiel, and on the 2d it passed the Douro, at Tordesillas, a place which I chose for the pivot of my motions. The line of the Douro is excellent. I made with detail every disposition which might render sure a good defence of this river, and I had no cause to doubt my being able to defeat every enterprise of the enemy, in case they should attempt the passage. The 3d, being the day after that we had passed the Douro, he made several assemblages of his forces, and some slight attempts to effect this passage to Pollos, a point which, for him, would be very advantageous. The troops which I had disposed, and a few cannon shot, were sufficient to make him immediately give up his enterprise. In continual expectation of receiving succours from the army of the North, which had been promised in so solemn and reiterated a manner, I endeavoured to add, by my own industry, to the means of the army. My cavalry was much inferior to that of the enemy. The English had nearly 5,000 horse, English or German, without counting the Spaniards formed into regular troops. I had no more than 2,000. With this disproportion, in what manner could one manœuvre his enemy? How avail one's self of any advantage that might be obtained? I had but one means of augmenting my cavalry, and that was by taking the useless horses for the service of the
(*To be continued.*)

ENGLISH LIBERTY OF THE PRESS,

As illustrated in the Prosecution and Punishment of

WILLIAM COBBETT.

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IN order that my countrymen and that the world may not be deceived, duped, and cheated upon this subject, I, WILLIAM COBBETT, of Botley, in Hampshire, put upon record the following facts; to wit: That, on the 24th June, 1809, the following article was published in a London news-paper, called the *COURIER*:—"The Mutiny amongst the *LO-CAL MILITIA*, which broke out at Ely, was "fortunately suppressed on Wednesday by the "arrival of four squadrons of the *GERMAN "LEGION CAVALRY* from Bury, under the "command of General Auckland. Five of the "ringleaders were tried by a Court-Martial, and "sentenced to receive 500 lashes each, part of which "punishment they received on Wednesday, and "a part was remitted. A stoppage for their knap-sacks was the ground of the complaint that excited this mutinous spirit, which occasioned "the men to surround their officers, and demand "what they deemed their arrears. The first "division of the German Legion halted yesterday "at Newmarket on their return to Bury."—That, on the 1st July, 1809, I published, in the *Political Register*, an article censuring, in the strongest terms, these proceedings; that, for so doing, the Attorney General prosecuted, as seditious libellers, and by Ex-Officio Information, me, and also my printer, my publisher, and one of the principal retailers of the *Political Register*; that I was brought to trial on the 15th June, 1810, and was, by a Special Jury, that is to say, by 12 men out of 48 appointed by the Master of the Crown Office, found guilty; that, on the 20th of the same month, I was compelled to give bail for my appearance to receive judgment; and that, as I came up from Botley (to which place I had returned to my family and my farm on the evening of the 15th), a Tipstaff went down from London in order to seize me, personally; that, on the 9th of July, 1810, I, together with my printer, publisher, and the news-man, were brought into the Court of King's Bench to receive judgment; that the three former were sentenced to be imprisoned for some months in the King's Bench prison; that I was sentenced to be imprisoned for two years in Newgate, the great receptacle for malefactors, and the front of which is the scene of numerous hangings in the course of every year; that the part of the prison in which I was sentenced to be confined is sometimes inhabited by felons, that felons were actually in it at the time I entered it; that one man was taken out of it to be transported in about 48 hours after I was put into the same yard with him; and that it is the place of confinement for men guilty of unnatural crimes, of whom there are four in it at this time; that, besides this imprisonment, I was sentenced to pay a thousand pounds *TO THE KING*, and to give security for my good behaviour for seven years, myself in the sum of 3,000 pounds, and

two sureties in the sum of 1,000 pounds each; that the whole of this sentence has been executed upon me, that I have been imprisoned the two years, have paid the thousand pounds *TO THE KING*, and have given the bail, Timothy Brown and Peter Walker, Esqrs. being my sureties; that the Attorney General was Sir Vicary Gibbs, the Judge who sat at the trial Lord Ellenborough, the four Judges who sat at passing sentence Ellenborough, Grose, Le Blanc, and Bailey; and that the jurors were, Thomas Rhodes of Hampstead Road, John Davis of Southampton Place, James Ellis of Tottenham Court Road, John Richards of Bayswater, Thomas Marsham of Baker Street, Robert Heathcote of High Street Marylebone, John Maud of York Place Marylebone, George Bagster of Church Terrace Pancras, Thomas Taylor of Red Lion Square, David Deane of St. John Street, William Palmer of Upper Street Islington, Henry Favre of Pall Mall; that the Prime Ministers during the time were Spencer Perceval, until he was shot by John Bellingham, and after that Robert B. Jenkinson, Earl of Liverpool; that the prosecution and sentence took place in the reign of King George the Third, and that, he having become insane during my imprisonment, the 1,000 pounds was paid to his son, the Prince Regent, in his behalf; that, during my imprisonment, I wrote and published 364 Essays and Letters upon political subjects; that, during the same time, I was visited by persons from 197 cities and towns, many of them as a sort of deputies from Societies or Clubs; that, at the expiration of my imprisonment, on the 9th of July, 1812, a great dinner was given in London for the purpose of receiving me, at which dinner upwards of 600 persons were present, and at which Sir Francis Burdett presided; that dinners and other parties were held on the same occasion in many other places in England; that, on my way home, I was received at Alton, the first town in Hampshire, with the ringing of the Church bells; that a respectable company met me and gave me a dinner at Winchester; that I was drawn from more than the distance of a mile into Botley by the people; that, upon my arrival in the village, I found all the people assembled to receive me; that I concluded the day by explaining to them the cause of my imprisonment, and by giving them clear notions respecting the flogging of the Local Militia-men at Ely, and respecting the employment of German Troops; and, finally, which is more than a compensation for my losses and all my sufferings, I am in perfect health and strength, and, though I must, for the sake of six children, feel the diminution that has been made in my property (thinking it right in me to decline the offer of a subscription), I have the consolation to see growing up three sons, upon whose hearts, I trust, all these facts will be engraven.

WM. COBBETT.

Botley, July 23, 1812.

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